Google Inc. et al v. Egger et al
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DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20511

April 16, 2009

Statement by the Director of National Intelligence
Dennis C. Blair

One of our most effective tools in discovering groups planning to attack us are their communications, and it is the job of the NSA to intercept them. The NSA does this vital work under legislation that was passed by the Congress; the NSA actions are supervised by my office and by the Justice Department under court-approved safeguards; when the intercepts are conducted against Americans, it is with individual court orders.

Under these authorities the officers of the National Security Agency collect large amounts of international telecommunications, and under strict rules review and analyze some of them. These intercepts have played a vital role in many successes we have had in thwarting terrorist attacks since 9/11. On occasion, NSA has made mistakes and intercepted the wrong communications. The numbers of these mistakes are very small in terms of our overall collection efforts, but each one is investigated, the Congress and the courts are notified, corrective measures are taken, and improvements are put in place to prevent reoccurrences.

Let me be clear, I do not and will not support any surveillance activities that circumvent established processes for their lawful authorization and execution. Additionally, we go to great lengths to ensure that the privacy and civil liberties of U.S. persons are protected.

The NSA is vital to the intelligence community's efforts to keep our country safe and to provide valuable intelligence to our decision makers and military operations.

Even in 2009, there are organizations plotting to kill Americans using terror tactics, and although the memories of 9/11 are becoming more distant, we in the intelligence services must stop them.

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